

#165 RALPH GOOLD: USS *VESTAL*

Bart Fredo (BF): Okay. Let me slate this. The following interview is with Ralph Goold, and it was conducted on December 3, 1986, in Honolulu. And it is about three o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Goold now lives in Pleasanton, California. The interview is being conducted by Bart Fredo and also in the room is Mark Tanaka-Sanders of the National Park Service.

Mr. Goold, let me start off by asking you to tell us your name and your hometown back in 1941.

Ralph Goold (RG): My name is Ralph Goold and I came from Burley, Idaho.

BF: What branch of the service were you in and what was your rank?

RG: Well, I didn't have a rank. I had enlisted, I had enlisted as an enlisted man and December 7 of '41, I was an Electrician's Mate First Class.

BF: In the Navy?

RG: In the Navy.

BF: Where were you stationed?

RG: Pearl Harbor.

BF: Aboard?

RG: The USS *VESTAL*.

BF: And that's, what, a repair ship?

RG: The *VESTAL* was the repair ship for all of the battleships and the heavy cruisers in the Pacific fleet at that time.

BF: And the *VESTAL* was tied up right next to the *ARIZONA*?

RG: Yes, we were moored alongside of it.

BF: Early that morning, before the attack started, what were you doing?

RG: Well, we'd had breakfast and as usual, why, we always, the kids gather out on the different parts of the ship and we happened to be out on the weld deck, which is about two-thirds from the stern of the ship, forward, and just to the back of where the mess halls are on that particular ship. And we were all looking out toward the submarine base, or out towards Aiea landing, which is a recreation landing, recreation place for all of the Navy people -- have the new handball stuff like that. Then all of a sudden, we seen these planes come in. And we were just plain astounded, we couldn't believe, we'd never seen anything like it.

BF: Who did you think it was? An air . . .

RG: Well, we thought it was a stupid bunch of pilots having an odd day on Sunday. We couldn't figure out what it was for a few minutes. We found out awful shortly.

BF: What was the first indication? What was the first indication you had something was out of the ordinary?

RG: Okay, the first indication was when we seen the torpedoes go. We seen the Japanese planes come in, and the torpedoes, they dropped 'em all. There was four torpedo planes coming, you know, in the Battleship Row, and they coming in fours. And they . . .

BF: They're coming right at you?

RG: Oh yeah. They were coming right at us. And we seen the torpedoes let go. They were probably, I would say, the torpedoes was let go within somewhere between a quarter and a half a mile ashore. Then they just stayed water level and come right on in. And that first, the torpedoes was set awful low and they went underneath us, into the *ARIZONA*.

BF: Right under the vessel?

RG: Under the vessel, yes. We didn't draw as much water as the *ARIZONA*.

BF: How many of them hit the *ARIZONA*?

RG: I don't know. I don't know because -- the reason I don't know is that I disappeared after the first four was dropped, because I went to my battle station at that time.

BF: Was below deck?

RG: Yes. All I know is that when that first four planes come in, they started shooting with their, I guess, with their twenty millimeters, or something like that, and we were standing on a steel deck. And the bullets landed all over the place.

BF: Anybody hit on your ship?

RG: Yes, there were . . . I don't really know who they are at this time. It's been so many years. I know I have fifteen to twenty splinters of steel in my legs, but I never got a direct hit.

BF: Did you see anybody get hit there?

RG: No, I did not see anybody get hit with bullets, no. Not direct, no. We all got away from that area.

BF: When the torpedo or torpedoes first hit the *ARIZONA*, describe that, what happened?

RG: It's kind of a tough situation to explain that. You see, what happened, the torpedo planes come in first, then the dive bombers come in behind that, and the dive bombers had those 1,500 pound bombs, so it was hard for us to

actually say which one done what to the ship, whether it was the bombs or the torpedoes.

BF: The first explosion, though, what effect did it have on you and your ship?

RG: The first explosion, that's kind of a tough question to answer. If you'd asked me what I'd done, I could probably lead you into it.

BF: What'd you do?

RG: Okay, what I'd done, my condition, condition two, was one of the conditions for battle, prior to going into actual combat. And a condition two, me being in the repair department, I went down into the electric shop and I turned the main blower off and I started to dog the big hatch down, this -- it was about a six-foot hatch, that watertight compartment.

BF: To close it?

RG: Close it and dog it down and I got all the dogs down but one. And that's when we got hit and the *ARIZONA* got hit at the same time. Torpedoes and bombs, I don't know what went into the *ARIZONA*, but we took two 1,500 pound direct hits. One exploded on the other side of the bulkhead, directly from where I was standing, but we had a thick wall in the GSK, or general stores -- that's where we keep all the supplies -- and it brought that bulkhead out to me at the same time the *ARIZONA* blew up. When the *ARIZONA* blew up, it burned all of my hair off -- I was down three decks -- burned all my hair off. My mustache got burnt off.

BF: Heat came right through the hull of the ship?

RG: Heat came right on down. Heat come right on down, because there was a large cargo hatch at the top, you know, at the upper deck. And that explosion was so severe that it came down there and that's when I took off and went back up. I said, "Well, I got everything done but this, I'm going back up to my battle station." And when I went up to my battle station, there was only one guy there and the bomb that had exploded down below had went right through where my battle station was and there was no one there but one guy and he was dead. And about that time was when the executive officer gave orders to abandon ship. The reason he gave the orders was simply when the *ARIZONA* blew up, it blew everybody in the topside on the *VESTAL* and the *ARIZONA*, it blew 'em overboard.

BF: How many men was that, would you estimate? Rough estimate.

RG: Oh, I suppose, minimum of seventy-five, including the captain, [Commander] Cassin Young.

BF: Captain of the *VESTAL*?

RG: Yes. He was the captain, yes.

BF: What happened next?

RG: Okay. The funny part of it, our executive officer, his name was Young also. And Young, the executive officer, had to give orders to abandon ship. But what happened, the captain swam back underneath the burning oil, because the oil was on fire all the way around the battleship, all of Battleship Row. And he got back aboard, although he was severely burned and he reversed the order.

BF: Why?

RG: Because he felt he could save the ship. And he reversed the order and there was a bunch of kids that was with me -- the ones that we were talking about before -- the ones that couldn't swim in this burning oil. I could not swim in burning oil, so I chose, I'm just not going to die and go and burn up, just not clear. But the miracle of all of it was when we -- I don't know exact, I can't state for sure, but the only thing we could figure out, we were far below decks in the last, latter part of the ship. The forward part of the ship below decks were on fire, and evidently that explosion from the *ARIZONA*, the only way we could figure, it put our fires out.

BF: The concussion . . .

RG: Yes.

BF: . . . put the fires out aboard your ship?

RG: Yes, aboard the *VESTAL*. Yes. But anyway, the captain come back and he reversed the order. And so, what he done, we grabbed -- he told a group of us that was there to grab some fire axes because the *ARIZONA* was going down faster than we were.

BF: And you were tied to the *ARIZONA*.

RG: About four or five, six foot away from us.

BF: With lines?

RG: Yes, with a big three-inch lines. You know, moored in between, you know. And the *ARIZONA* was going down straight and we were going down, we were going down straight also, but the problem was the *ARIZONA* was going down twice as, three times as fast as we were. And our whole bottom was open in the rear, in the stern of the ship. So we were going down astern, but the *ARIZONA* was going straight down and pulling us at an angle. And so we had to chop the lines between us and the *ARIZONA*. So we chopped the line and a lot of us down there got knocked in the head, you know, and when them lines, when they snapped with those thousands of tons of steel, from that ship, when they snapped, and like a . . . well, I don't have to tell you what would happen with the power there is of a gosh-darned battleship when you have another ship alongside of it, when you cut those lines.

So we cut the lines, we got the lines cut and then when that was done, we seen a lot of kids was free in the middle part of that *ARIZONA*. So the four, five of us there -- I don't remember who they are at this time, it's been so many years -- well, we threw lines over at the *ARIZONA* and they tied 'em on the gun tubs and they all started overhanding, and we pulled 'em off and we got 'em

off the *ARIZONA*. We must have saved probably twenty or thirty kids off of there.

BF: They went hand over hand . . .

RG: Hand over hand, yes.

BF: . . . over the water, over the burning water?

RG: That's right, that's right. Yeah. And we pulled 'em off of the *ARIZONA*. In fact, I talked to one guy yesterday on the plane, or today, on the plane, was one of the guys we helped off. (Laughs) He was one of the guys who came across.

But then the other thing that really saved us, you see, the day before, we had transferred the Chief [*Boatswain's*] Mate and he had taken command of one of the Navy tugs and he got under way and he seen we were in trouble. And he shot us a line over that burning oil, and some of us kids, we grabbed the line and pulled the thing over and got a piece of cable on us and he pulled us out, away from there. And the captain that sent all the people back to the engine room, and we had seventy pounds of steam up on those reciprocating engines, the old type of engine we had on that old ship. We got it under way, we got her under way and . . .

(Taping stops, then restarts)

(Conversation off-mike)

BF: While all of this was going on, did you really have a chance to think about what was happening?

RG: Well, we knew what was happening. There's one thing I forgot to mention was when that first plane that was, that came in, well, the second -- you know, there was four of 'em -- and the second row, the one that come in that went over our ship, I seen the Japanese insignia and there was no question about it. But we had already a little bit warned that morning. You see, one of our lookouts, I mean, our quartermaster had the watch that morning, reported to our officer on deck that there was two Japanese sea planes overhead, with the Japanese insignia on them. And nobody paid any attention to 'em. So we were half prepared, the kids there, because we was very well acquainted with all of those young fellows and . . . but we were sort of prepared, we was sort of expecting something. We didn't know what.

BF: When these planes came in, could you see the pilots very plainly?

RG: The pilot, the first pilot that the pilot came directly over us, I -- as I've always mentioned to everybody -- believe it or not, I actually believe if the canopy had been pulled back, I could see the smile on his face, and -- as I always say, coming from the state of Idaho -- if I had a spud, I could hit him right between the eyes with it. I mean, I think today, I could still identify the guy with that smile on his face. He was so close.

BF: That really must be burned in your memory.

RG: That's burned in my memory all these years, that smile on that guy's face. I don't think I'll ever forget it. Especially when those machine gun bullets started landing around you at the same time (chuckles).

BF: How did you react? What was going through your mind when you realized the magnitude of what was happening?

RG: You just don't. When something happens like that, you just don't have time to -- you just don't, you just seem to go with what comes naturally. That's about all I can say. You didn't have time to get scared. You knew it was war because you'd expecting it for such a long time.

BF: When this tug was towing you away from the *ARIZONA*, did you have a chance then to look around?

RG: That's when I really had the opportunity to look around, because, you know, we'd got the line pulled up there and we'd chopped the lines between us and the *ARIZONA*. We got away out there. And that's when we started watching. And that's when I seen the high levels come in later.

BF: These are dive bombers?

RG: The high level Japanese bombers, yes. And when they came in, the thing that has always stuck in my mind is I remember seeing as high as seven and eight and nine and ten bombs in one cluster coming down and practically everyone of 'em missed a ship going in the water alongside the Battleship Row.

BF: Exploding?

RG: No. Very seldom. I didn't see any of 'em explode that came down that hit the -- if they hit a ship, they'd explode, but I never paid no attention to that. All I was watching, sitting up there watching them come, just hoped we didn't get a cluster of 'em 'cause we couldn't get out of the way. You could see the bombs coming, they just go right in the water, without exploding and many of them did not explode. They're still sitting there today, I guess.

BF: So as you were being pulled away from the *ARIZONA*, did you pass the other battleships along Battleship Row, or did you go in the other direction?

RG: No, we had to go in the opposite direction. You see, if we'd have passed the other battleships, we would have to go up to Ford Island, where we were consequently heading out toward the submarine base and the recreational landing out there.

BF: Did you see many men get hit through the course of the morning?

RG: No. I didn't really see many men get hit. I guess the thing we all got to remember is that mostly when you get torpedoes, your death rate, all your main deaths is going to be below decks, in the engine rooms, in the fire rooms and the ammunition handling rooms and such places as that.

BF: Did you see any of the attacking planes get hit?

RG: I had never seen one plane get hit, no. Not that morning, I did not see a one get hit. I seen it, a couple of 'em smoking a little bit, but I did not see 'em exactly get hit, no.

BF: So you were pulled away from the *ARIZONA* by the tug and then you were forced aground.

RG: Yes.

BF: What happened then?

RG: Well, we jammed her into the ground and there was nothing we could do. We didn't know how intense it was going to be, we had no idea what to do so we were so close to land, they give us a -- we took one of the motor launches and we all went ashore, a lot of us went ashore where the recreation landing and the Army was setting up pill boxes with the filling sandbags and a good lot of us from the ship was over there filling sandbags and helping the Army set up these gun tubs over there. In fact, it even got to the point, just to show it, I mean, I was over there so long, working, we was all trying to do something, that they had even sent a missing in action back to my folks, which I didn't even know about until about ten years ago. (Chuckles.) I missed a roll call.

BF: While you were being towed over there, did you have an opportunity to look up and see the rest of the attack, or had it completed by then?

RG: Well, the main part of the attack was about all over when we got, when we jammed it into the beach, because we could only go about two or three miles an hour and we just barely creeping along.

BF: So you didn't really see . . .

RG: When I seen it all was during the process of going from where we were alongside the *ARIZONA*, going over to the beach.

BF: Describe what you saw during that process, during that part.

RG: Mainly what we saw was you just looked back and you see everything on fire on the Battleship Row. You could see the *NEVADA* hit up ahead of us. You could see the *WEST VIRGINIA* and the *CALIFORNIA*, and the *TENNESSEE*, and the *ARIZONA*, you could see 'em all. You seen the *OKLAHOMA* tip over, the *ARIZONA* going down, and all you could do is just thank god that you got out of there.

BF: Tell us about watching the *OKLAHOMA* roll over.

RG: Yeah, you could just set there and it just seemed to go sideways and gradually roll over.

BF: And men were trying to walk the . . .

RG: Yeah, you could see them.

BF: . . . the hull?

RG: You could see the men walking in there and a lot trapped inside. I know we sent our crews over with all the cutting torches and everything to try to

get 'em out of the bottom part of the ship, which they did save a lot, but the trouble then, I remember, we sent the fellows over there, but they started, what they were doing is using all of the oxygen up inside of those compartments. So they had to finally go with cutting, you know, just chipping guns to chip the, you know, cut it some way other than the cutting torches 'cause it was using all the oxygen, killing the kids and so on.

BF: Please describe for us the *ARIZONA* going down.

RG: Just a mass of fire, that's about all you could say. It was a mass of fire and everything just practically blown to pieces. You know, when you really look at that thing, you see that Long Lance torpedo the Japanese had was one of the most powerful torpedoes that was ever built, probably five or six times the power that any of our torpedoes ever had. And with the double bottoms opened and the blisters opened -- I don't know whether you know what a blister -- see, on the outside of a battleship, you had eighteen inches of solid steel going down over the critical parts of the ship, such as the fire room, the engine room, where the powder magazines are. So what they felt if . . . evidently, the Navy felt after they put those armor plates on there, they felt if they put these blisters it was watertight compartments that went out and went down over the outside of this fourteen or twelve-inch armor, whatever it was. And that was supposed to explode the torpedoes and explode 'em outside so that it didn't go into the hull. But the Japanese, evidently, knew exactly the depth of those and they come in underneath the armor plate.

So with all those torpedoes going in there and going and exploding, I think probably in that magazine, that forward magazine, I'm sure a torpedo had to go that or else get one of those 1,500 pound bombs in it and blow that and just set everything on fire. There was only one or two spots on the *ARIZONA* that wasn't on fire, then all that oil -- our oil tanks was broke, the *OKLAHOMA*'s was broke, the *ARIZONA*'s was broke and that was all on fire, all the way around us.

BF: Is there one thing that you saw that stands out in your mind more than anything else?

RG: Yes, I think there's one thing that probably has lived with me all my life. And I think it probably done me more good as a serviceman to see it happen, is when Cassin Young, our captain, came back aboard and made the decision that he did to get out of there. He knew what he was doing and saved the lives of everybody that was saved aboard that ship.

BF: You feel he did?

RG: There's no question about it. Where was you going? I couldn't swim to Ford Island in burning oil. He evidently, somewhere in his academy days, had had that experience. But I had never been taught how to swim through burning oil. I didn't know. None of our guys did. Some of the kids jumped over and burned up in the stuff. I don't remember who they were to this day, but I couldn't swim through it.

BF: Something very important happened to Captain Young.

RG: Yes, I remember about two or three weeks later, Admiral Nimitz came aboard and awarded him the Congressional Medal of Honor and no man that ever

went to sea deserved it more. But I learned one thing, no matter how tough the captain is, it's when you're in combat, brother, you want the guy that knows just what the hell he's doing when that time comes for that old showdown. And I've lived that all my life, and I think every young serviceman, if they learn that one thing, they want that guy at the top that knows what he's doing when those old bullets starts coming at you (chuckles), and he did. And later, the Captain Cassin Young, he got killed when he took command of the *SAN FRANCISCO* off the Guadalcanal. Him and Admiral Callaghan got killed on the *SAN FRANCISCO*. I think the counting tower of the *SAN FRANCISCO*, it's on display over in San Francisco there on the beach there now.

BF: How long did you stay in Hawaii after the attack?

RG: Well, I left April 30, I got my orders and I went back to Miami, Florida. They sent me to submarine chaser training center in Miami, Florida.

BF: And, briefly, what did you do for the rest of the war?

RG: Well, I don't think there's very few people that seen more combat than I did during World War II. When I went back to Miami, Florida, they sent me to a submarine chaser training school. What I . . . I think that was the only schooling I ever got in the Navy. I lasted fifteen minutes. And the commander come in and -- that had the shakedown center at Miami -- and he says, "Who's Goold?"

I says, "Well, what the hell did I do now?" (Laughs) I mean, aw, come on, you know, I just dropped to engineering office.

So I went up there and he says, "Well," he says, "Ralph," he says, "we've been looking at your records and we see you're one of the few people, probably, that we have around that's capable of rewinding anything that's made." And he says, "I'll tell you what we got, " he says, "right now," he says, "our job from the Navy Department is that we have to set up a repair base here to take care of probably a thousand ships that will be built in the ship yards on the East coast." So he says, "What I want you to do is to set up a motor rewind shop, a gyro repair shop, a plane shop and the crews to get all of the bugs out of these ships." And he says, "Your priority is above air. You can have anything you want." So it's the only time in my life I could get anything I want. (Chuckles)

BF: So, to sum up . . .

RG: So I stayed there. I stayed there about year and a half, something like that. Then after I got that all organized, I left, I had to go back to sea and I had my choice at that time, because I knew everybody at the shakedown center and I chose a ship that -- was probably the meanest warfare I've ever seen. That was aboard the [USS] *PCER 851*, Patrol Convoy Escort Rescue ship. There was only three of 'em ever built and probably two of them had only seen major combat. They were built to travel with the North Atlantic convoys. They had the most modern echo ranging, submarine detecting and fighting equipment known in the world at that time.

So we traveled with the North Atlantic convoys for a little while, but we seen -- we were just a little bit late then, because they had mastered the U-boats with the small carriers. So what they done, we was -- we pulled into

Bermuda one evening and somebody had got, somebody had captured a complete German U-boat. So they give us a German U-boat crew and we went into a Philadelphia Navy yard and that was a mistake that, in my life, that's always stuck with me.

The fellow that --- the guy it was -- in fact, this fellow flew a one-star flag, which is a commodore. And the commodore of the ship that was in front of us when we were unloading these German U-boat cruisers happened to have graduated from the Harvard law school with our captain. But our captain had never seen combat, but probably one of the finest captains. I had never served with a finer human being. But he wanted to go out to the Pacific. So we got by -- he told this commodore what he wanted and what he liked to do. He'd liked to get out where he could do a little more good than what he was doing at the present time. So anyway, the captain come up to me there in Bermuda, I was setting out in the foscle one night in the evening and the captain come up and looked at me and he says, "Ralph," he says, "you know, I finally got the good word."

And I says, "What's that, captain?"

Well, he says, "We're going out to the Pacific where we can do some good."

BF: So let's just briefly summarize what you did in the Pacific.

RG: Okay. We left there, went through the Panama Canal, went out to [Funafuti] and the Ellice Islands and there to pitch--, I mean into New Guinea, and back to Manus, we farmed there. Went on the initial invasion of Leyte Island. In Leyte Island, we hit, then we hit three reinforcement landings at Ormoc Bay and soon the site of the Leyte Island. And I remember about the second night or third night after we went into Leyte, they sent us out through the Surabaya Straits and our job was rescue. Our job up there was to go alongside any ship, under any conditions, take all their dead, their wounded, help them fight their fires and their damage control work to keep afloat. I was a warrant electrician at the time and I had charge of fifty percent of the crews.

Okay, we went out that one night. We laid halfway out through the Surabaya Straits, on a stretch of land that the Army had held next to Leyte Island. And all I know is we could see these, on our radio, we could pick up our PT boats lined up across the channel and the DD's and the DD's behind 'em and the light cruiser and the eight-inch cruisers, the fourteen-inch battle wagons and the sixteen-inch battle wagons left. But I'll never forget it when it come over the TBS, it says, "Stand by for Japanese fleet bombardment."

So there we were, between the two fleets, set off to one side and the Japanese fleet and the American fleet met head on, and we were in between 'em. And, brother, if you ever seen fireworks, you should have witnessed that. And I think it was three days before we ever got any sleep, pulling people out of the water.

BF: Let me bring you back to Pearl Harbor just then. I was remiss in not asking you about this earlier. During the time after the attack . . .

RG: Yes.

BF: . . . martial law was in effect. Did that affect you in any way?

RG: We never had time for it to affect us. 'Cause, see, we put our own ship back in condition. The only thing we done was put a caisson underneath a ship and poured it full of concrete, pumped it all out at one end of the dry dock and patched that thing. And then we took all of our motors and we done all of our overhaul work ourselves. No ship work was bid, we all stayed aboard until we got the ship back in commission. It took us about two or three weeks and everything was ready to go. And we were back in service, overhauling battleships and cruisers.

BF: When someone mentions the words "Pearl Harbor, December 7" what do you think of now when someone mentions? What's the first thing that comes to mind?

RG: I think what I think of more than anything else is the two years that I spent out here with the pineapple fleet prior to that. It was a fairly well lost two years of my life. You know what, I don't have to tell you the serviceman was pretty well disliked in the Hawaiian Islands at that time. In fact, the last year, I don't think I ever went ashore more than two or three times. When I did go ashore, we'd go and play handball over at Aiea Landing, or we'd go to submarine base and have a couple of beers.

BF: Some people who lived through the attack on Pearl Harbor still hold some bad feelings about Japan and about the Japanese. What are your feelings?

RG: Well, I have a lot of good friends that are Japanese today. I've had to forget it. I've had to forget it but every once in a while, like something like this, it really gets it out of your system, you know. It just sort of makes a person feel good to get it out. To me, it makes me feel good if I get someone to listen to me once in a while. So I don't have no hard feelings against 'em at this time. I . . . it's just hard to explain how you feel at different times. Every once in a while, if the wrong part of it comes up or, you know, it . . . it's just tough to -- I can say it, I can live with it today. Maybe that's an easy way to put it.

BF: Would you like to sit down and talk with Japanese survivors of the Pearl Harbor attack?

RG: Wouldn't bother me a bit. I have a lot of good Japanese friends at the present time.

BF: If you could sit down with one of the attacking pilots, what would you like to know more than anything?

RG: Well, I'm an ardent reader and I don't know if there's anything I really need to know, I've read everything so thoroughly in all of the different fine books that's been written.

Now, we stopped out there in the Philippines and I should probably go through the rest of that with you.

BF: Very briefly, we're running out of time.

RG: Oh, okay, okay. We got through the Philippines then the next was Mindoro in the Philippines, then we went back and went through Iwo Jima and all of that. Then we went back to Philippines again. From Philippines, we went to Okinawa and the [Ryukyu] Island. Okinawa and AH-EH-SHU and the [Ryukyu] Islands. And then there, in the [Ryukyu] alone, we went alongside, I think it was over 100 American destroyers that was hit with suicide warfare, if that tells you anything. And if I remember correctly, I think we were assigned to three complete squadrons and destroyers, we were the only ship that didn't get hit, in the picket lines.

BF: Did you make it through the war unscathed, except for the injury on your leg during the attack?

RG: The only thing I had -- I would have been a career man in the Navy, but that year in the rescue work and handling the thousands of dead and wounded and pieces and fighting was -- I just got to be a plain, damn nervous wreck. The whole crew was that way. We just plain had it.

BF: You played a very key role in a very important event in history. Has that had a major impact, an effect on your life?

RG: It probably has. It probably has, 'cause I wouldn't have left the service if it hadn't been for me going, or us going through that, on that rescue ship. That was just a little more than the human anatomy could take.

BF: But specifically . . .

RG: The reason it's been good to me is for the simple reason I left the service. And for twenty-seven years I was an electrical contractor in California, and most of my work is with the oil companies. And yes, my life has been much better since then. I retired ten years ago and . . .

BF: Did the Pearl Harbor, did living through the Pearl Harbor attack teach you something? (Pause) About yourself?

RG: Yes. I think it probably would teach everyone on earth the same thing. It taught me one thing, when the old chips is down, the human anatomy is capable of doing anything.

BF: We can stop. Just a second.

(Taping stops, then restarts)

BF: In the weeks following the attack, after you prepared your own ship, then you started working on others, tell us, paint us a picture. What did you do? What was it like?

RG: Well, it was just -- actually, what was going on after that, I know they put me in the fire control department, and what we were doing, we started to put these stabilizers on these turrets on the light cruisers and the heavy cruisers . . .

(Tape is interrupted, restarts.)

BF: . . . right alongside the *ARIZONA*.

RG: The afternoon of December the sixth.

BF: So it's Saturday afternoon.

RG: That's right, yes.

BF: What was the *VESTAL* going to do to the *ARIZONA*?

RG: Overhaul it. Get all the final preparations to put the . . .

END OF INTERVIEW